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locum undique conglobari." While, therefore, this faith makes its home in our soul, we will not despair even of degraded and unhappy South America, seeing some flashes of poetic light above the general darkness, and remembering that, "amidst all the evils that the ancients did fabulously report to be in Pandora's box, they wittily placed hope on the utmost lip of it and extremity."

ART. VI. — *Significance of the Alphabet.* By CHARLES KRAITSIR, M. D. Boston: E. P. Peabody. 1846. 12mo. pp. 58.

WE hear much of the study of languages, but very little hitherto of the study of language. This most important and interesting branch of knowledge has not, up to this time, even been numbered among the natural sciences. This fact alone sufficiently attests how narrow and incorrect are our ideas on this subject. Nothing, indeed, can be more surprising than our total ignorance upon a matter continually claiming our attention, except, perhaps, the contentment with which we endure it. It would almost seem that, in our eyes, the study of language labored under some divine interdict, and that — actuated by a sentiment akin to that of the pious member of the British Parliament, who feared lest the enactments of that body in favor of the Jews should defeat the designs of Providence — we felt bound, by a religious obligation, to leave the languages of earth for ever under that curse of confusion in which the presumption of the heaven-scaling architects involved them.

The claims of the other sciences are fully recognized among us. Those which are, by distinction, called the Natural, enjoy a peculiar favor. Their manifest utility, the direct influence they have upon the arts of life, recommend them to our practical nation. The researches of chemists and naturalists, and the discoveries to which they lead, excite even a popular interest. But on the subject of language, the public mind is in a state of entire apathy; this most interesting and truly living science is regarded as a mere dead matter of books and parchments, the province of the pedant and the recluse, and wholly unconnected with the labors and pleasures of the every-day man. At the same time, with a singular inconsistency, a degree of superstitious respect is paid to men supposed to possess great acquirements of this sort ; as if the wearisome and thankless nature of the pursuit conferred a sort of merit upon those who have devoted themselves to so profitless a penance.

But while extended and thorough attainments in the field of language are deemed superfluous, fashion and a certain traditionary *prestige* confer a vague value on some slender and superficial acquirements of this sort. We pass a great part of the most important years of our lives in the laborious acquisition of a few varieties of speech ; induced to this pursuit, too often, merely by compliance with custom and prejudice ; or if a worthier motive sway us, and we seek the keys which shall unlock for us the stores of ancient learning, or open a communication with contemporary genius, we regard the toil we bestow on their acquirement but as the price to be paid for a desired good ; it does not occur to us, that, followed in another spirit, and under different auspices, the pursuit itself would, at every step, yield a vivid pleasure, and conduct into one of the noblest fields of science. We continue to walk blindly through the planless maze, with no better assistance than some unreasoning trick of memory, or such small remains of our instinctive perception of truth as a false education has left to us. It does not occur to us that language also must have its fundamental principles, and that these primal laws must be, as in every other science, simple, easy of comprehension when once disclosed, and universal in their application. Only with regard to language are we thus faithless ; the mind of man is so impressed with the consciousness of design and order reigning through the universe, that he asks of all, even the most mysterious phenomena of nature, the causes and laws of their existence. He compels the subtile, invisible fluid that surrounds him to disclose its elements ; the wandering, shifting vapors that cloud the atmosphere, he questions of the laws that prescribe their form and course ; yet in a world where we feel that the birth and development of all things follow a fixed plan, where even the lilies of the field clothe themselves by a divine appointment, we are content to believe that this beautiful growth of articulate speech has sprung up and unfolded itself by chance, or that it is the capricious and uncertain work of man alone, undirected by the Great Ordering Mind.

It is the unreasonable manner in which the study of language is conducted, that renders this pursuit so unsatisfactory to independent and ingenuous minds; and which has caused it to be viewed, in this country, with ever increasing disfavor. The practical man asks, with reason, what gain his son is to reap from all those patient years whose sacrifice a learned education demands. The profession of a scholar, as a means of livelihood, is but a precarious dependence. Is it, then, the increased power of brain which mental exertion, however directed, gives? This end may be answered, and the accomplishment of some object in itself desirable be at the same time attained. He directs his child, then, to some pursuit that promises success in life; and, for his intellectual recreation, to chemistry, to botany, to natural history of any sort. And he judges rightly; the years that our youth pass in what are termed, by preëminence, classical studies, are in a great measure spent in vain. The chief advantage gained from them is, perhaps, to know how little others know, and thus to be saved from that uncomfortable dread of inferiority that unlearned or self-taught men are subject to feel in the presence of those who have enjoyed what are called advantages of education. The actual amount of knowledge gained is meagre indeed, in proportion to the toil expended.

Young men pass from the academy into the active business of life, and — except the few in whom the love of study for itself is by nature strong, and the fewer who by the glow of their own genius can quicken the most lifeless things — cease altogether from classical pursuits; or, if they sometimes devote an hour of leisure to refreshing their college lore, it is rather on the economical principle of not wholly losing what has cost so much labor in the winning, than from any delight in the pursuit itself. It is far otherwise, if they have in early life acquired a love for some branch of natural science; this affection never quits them; for science is inexhaustible; every day opens a glimpse of some fact that to-morrow is to see ascertained. Language, if taught as a science, would have the same unsatiating charm. It is not alone their supposed superior usefulness that gives the other sciences the preference they enjoy over that of language.

Man is not the mere earth-worm the disciples of utility would make of him. He has an instinctive consciousness that he lives not by bread alone. Knowledge, for its own pure sake, is among the things he covets. His soul asks for it, as for that which is as essential to its growth as material food is to that of the body. But while the human mind is never indifferent to true knowledge, it turns with resentment from all that usurps the name without offering the reality. The study of those sciences that are now distinguished as the natural has been disencumbered of the burden of pedantry and prejudice; the system of nature has replaced the systems of schools; great principles are appealed to; truth alone is sought; no authority is acknowledged but such as is found in the book of nature itself. But with regard to the study of languages, we remain yet in the darkness of the Middle Ages. The books of instruction are composed upon the same principles as then; or rather, if possible, they have become continually more dead, more pedantic. They lay down no large principles, but are overloaded with disquisitions upon minor points, and with canons, for the most part, the mere dicta of grammarians, whose narrow rules are, at the best, to the primitive laws of language, what petty municipal regulations are to the eternal principles of justice and morality.

Let us not be understood to disparage the study of the grammatical part of language. It is its not least interesting and wonderful side. In this are found the most remarkable proofs that language follows laws inherent in the nature of man. For it is a striking fact, meeting us in the study of languages, that the tongues of uncultivated nations are often more admirable in their construction, and more perfect in their grammatical forms, than the languages of civilized people; and that written languages are always far more corrupted than those that have depended for their preservation upon the uninstructed reason of a simple people. In what we have said above, then, we intended not to undervalue the study of grammar, properly so called; we spoke but of those compendiums which purport to be the exponents of the laws of languages. The necessity for arranging these laws in a written code is not commonly felt until the work of deterioration is already far advanced. Grammars, therefore, have usually been first written in the decay of the languages they expound; and though compiled with the laudable intention of arresting that decay, have too commonly, from the narrow scope of their authors, tended to further and confirm it, by stamping abuses with authority, by establishing exceptions as rules, and restricting phenomena which are the just result of euphonic or logical laws to the class of exceptions and anomalies. The old scholars and grammarians, however, in whose steps our compilers of grammars continue to tread, were men of a different sort from their modern followers. Their means of knowledge were few; their range of ideas was limited; but they wrote up to their light; their labors were conscientious; they had a sincere desire to instruct, and their works supplied a need that was felt at the time they were written. We live in an age when all the means of enlightenment are in our power; the whole world is open to us, civilized and savage; all the tongues of earth offer themselves to our investigation, in every stage, — of infancy, of mid-life vigor, and of exhausted age. But we neglect these living subjects, to pore over fossil remains, and give up the use of our own senses, to hear and understand with those of men who lived a thousand years ago. It is as if the botanist should renounce the outer world, and shut himself up with a copy of Linnæus and a few boxes of dried plants; forgetting that Nature yet wakes and blooms, and that the same voices which summoned the votaries of an earlier time to her worship still whisper winningly from every shaded dell and sunny hill-slope.

The book which makes the subject of this article is of a different character from the works on the subject of language that commonly fall under our notice. It is a most unpretending volume, but contains within its modest compass what might well make the fortune of many a quarto. It is no small art to make a small book; and it is an art which will be continually more and more prized in this age of literary exuberance. It is only the man who has a thorough grasp of his subject who knows how to condense; he only can seize on what is great and important, and present it forcibly and clearly; while less informed or less powerful minds grope from detail to detail, heap facts on facts, reasoning on reasoning, leaving the reader at last in a state of stupefied admiration, — sensible, perhaps, that he has been reading something very learned, but with only a dim and shadowy perception of the purpose of the writer, and the deductions he would draw from the materials he has heaped together. This mingling of vagueness with over-minuteness has been, in a peculiar manner, the failing of writers upon language. Even the German philologists, great and valuable as their labors are, are not wholly free from this reproach of overloading and unduly expanding their works. They relate all facts; they note all phenomena; what is important is placed side by side with what is trivial. Thus they produce works which well deserve to be called miracles of learning and of patient toil, but which can never, in any sense of the word, become popular. They are repositories most valuable to the scholar, but to the scholar only; for those already well informed upon the subjects of which they treat can alone know the comparative value of the facts they have amassed, or the inferences to be drawn from them.

The work under review belongs to that rare class of books which, while they are fitted to instruct the scholar, yet awaken and hold the attention of the unlearned. This is a privilege belonging only to works of the highest order. When the learned write for the learned, curious details, subtile reasoning, wire-drawn argument, suffice to interest minds accustomed to elaborate research and microscopic scrutiny; but the mind of the people, direct and unsophisticated, demands truth upon a larger scale. Genius and learning must meet in the man who would both satisfy the wise and allure the simple. It is this union of the poet and the man of science which has made the name of Liebig as a household word among us; it is this which has drawn delighted crowds of every order to hear Agassiz expound the wonders of creation, even when the theme from which he taught was that part of the animal world which, in itself, makes the smallest claim upon our interest.

The object of the work before us is to direct the attention of the public to the superficial manner in which the study of languages is conducted among us, and to point out the importance of the pursuit itself, whether regarded as a branch of science, or considered only in reference to its practical utility. With this intention, the author wisely brings before his readers extended and general views of the subject; for men must first be made to perceive that there is really something to be known, before they will enter on the task of investigation. He deals but little in the technicalities of philology, but states, in simple terms, striking facts, calculated to awaken the interest of all intelligent minds, even of those whose attention has previously been little directed to the subject of language. The style of this work is in itself well worthy of remark, composed, as it is, in a language foreign to the writer. It is written in pure, idiomatic English, wholly free from the faults incident to writers in a late acquired tongue, of unnecessary exactness, on the one hand, and an undue display of facility, leading to verbosity and commonplace, on the other. The style is throughout nervous and lucid, and rises at times into a strain of unpremeditated eloquence, revealing that enthusiasm for his subject which distinguishes the real disciple of science from the mere bookmaker.

From the opening passages of Dr. Kraitsir's work we quote the following : —

> "Language is the image of the human mind, the net result of human culture; if it is Babel, it is because men have abandoned themselves to chance, and lost sight of the principles by which language was constructed. But these principles are inherent in their nature, and men cannot lose their nature. All men, however diverse they may become by conflicting passions and interests, have yet the same reason, and the same organs of speech. All men, however distant in place, are yet plunged in a material universe, which makes impressions of an analogous character upon great masses. Languages therefore have a certain unity. Differing superficially, more or less, they begin to resemble each other, as soon as the observer goes beneath the surface."

The farther researches into language are extended, the more this wonderful resemblance among the languages of earth discloses itself. The advances which have been made in philology, during the last fifty years, have established affinities between languages which were formerly regarded as totally dissimilar. It is not long since the Celtic tongues were supposed to be foreign to the other languages of Europe. Sir William Jones pronounced the Semitic family of languages to be wholly unconnected with the Sanscrit, and with the tongues of Europe ; yet it is now fully established that there is as close an affinity between the Hebrew and Arabic, and the languages belonging to what is termed the Indo-European family, as between many of the different members of this family itself. Nor are these resemblances to be traced only in the languages of those nations of Asia and Europe descended from a common origin; they meet us also in the various dialects of North and South America, in the rude tongues of the Negro land, and of the country of the Hottentots. The names by which natural objects are distinguished are found to have a close affinity in all languages. The impression made by the qualities of these objects on the brain, conveyed by the same senses, is the same in universal man. Yet as each of these objects may be viewed under various aspects, as its qualities are manifold, so the names by which it is distinguished may be various. The sun may be equally recognized as the light-giver, the dispenser of heat, the quickener of life; from each of these attributes may spring an epithet. In the childhood of man, when Nature mirrored herself in his thought, and thought passed unconsciously into instinctive speech, what is now called metaphor was the natural language. Nor, in the youthful time, were these poetic images expressed, as now, by awkward compounding of words already doubly and trebly compounded. A single impulse of the breath, a single motion of throat, tongue, or lips, conveyed an idea. A complex idea was expressed by the union of another simple element with the first. These single syllables are the roots from which all languages have sprung. For the same law of economy reigns through the realm of language, that governs throughout the rest of the system of nature; this wide and various development of speech springs from the most simple elements.

At the basis of language lie great organic principles; to these succeed generic and specific laws, guiding the development of families, of classes, of individual tongues. It is the investigation and expounding of these laws which is the province of the philologist.

The grammatical formations of languages — subject to certain laws general to the human mind — will vary with each different nation, according to the greater development of one or another mental faculty; as, among individuals speaking the same language, each has a style of expression peculiar to himself, which distinguishes him as much as the lineaments of his face or the tones of his voice.

It follows, then, that it is to the roots of words we must apply ourselves, if we would find a system which shall be applicable to all languages. In handling modern tongues, we must first decompose the words, — made up, as they commonly are, of as many roots as there are syllables, — and then analyze the elements of the roots themselves, in order to discern the idea inherent in them, or that which they were originally employed to convey. To learn the acceptation of a word in some language from which we may have received it into our own is not to know its etymology; this is but to trace a portion of its history. To ascertain its etymology, in the true sense of the word, we must arrive at its natural and primary signification. Having established this, we may then trace the growth of the original idea, as it divides itself first into a few large limbs, then into minor branches, whence spring innumerable twigs and sprays, that clothe themselves with a luxuriance of leaf and flower, bearing no likeness to the parent germ, and yet its just and natural development.

But in order to tread this path of inquiry with security, it is necessary first to know accurately the affinities of articulate sounds and their legitimate mutations. An ignorance of these has led, on the one hand, to an obstinate skepticism as to the possibility of reducing to a system a pursuit apparently so vague as the genealogy of words; and on the other has given birth to extravagant theories and fantastic etymologies, which have brought discredit on the study of language itself, though these wild speculations have no more to do with philology, properly so called, than astrology with astronomy, or the black art with the labors of the chemist.

The use of writing, from the habit which cultivated nations thence acquire of judging of words by the eye rather than the ear, has caused us to lose in a great measure that natural perception of the affinities of sounds which is possessed by less artificial people. Dialectic differences made far less hindrance to the intercourse of kindred nations in ancient times, and in the present day obstruct it less among cognate unlettered tribes, than among the cultivated nations from a common stock. The very refinements which have from time to time been made in the notation of sounds, by distinguishing with a separate character slight varieties of sound and different powers of the same articulation, have had a tendency to disconnect them in men's minds, and to destroy the sense of their radical identity in signification. To such an extent is this dependence upon the written word carried in our time, that the substitution of a surd for a sonant, or *vice versâ*, the doubling of a root or the transposition of its elements, the introduction or omission of a casual liquid, is sufficient to obscure the most familiar word. Thus, many persons translating Greek and Latin into English fail to perceive the identity of the supposed foreign terms with words of similar meaning in English, — perhaps, indeed, the very words by which they render them, — unless where these last are direct derivatives from the former, and have been borrowed in times too recent to permit the relationship to be forgotten. The more ancient, but not less intimate, affinity that exists between the Teutonic and Celtic parts of our language and the tongues of the ancient world is too commonly overlooked.

For example, the Latin-derived word *fracture* is readily referred to *frangere*, while, perhaps, the affinity between FR*an*G*ere* and our English word BR*ea*K is overlooked; though these words are coincident in their elements, as in their meaning. We recognize V*i*G*ilo* in *vigil*; but not less nearly connected with this Latin word are our plain English W*a*K*e* and W*at*CH.* *Doctor* is easily traced to D*o*C*ere*, yet it perhaps escapes us that our common English T*eacher* † is of the very same root with its more dignified Latin synonyme. *Nocturnal* comes to us from the Latin, but is not more closely connected with N*o*C*s* (*nox*) than the Teutonic N*i*G*ht* and N*acht* are; nor is *lucid* more nearly related to L*ucere*, though directly derived from it, than are the English L*i*G*ht* and GL*ow*. We might multiply examples, almost indefinitely, of common English and German words found in Latin and Greek, with the same or closely related meaning, which are yet commonly learned anew as wholly strange words, instead of being recognized as familiar acquaintance. The only remedy for this obtuseness would be to teach the alphabet in such a manner as shall give an early, familiar acquaintance with the nature and the legitimate interchange of articulate sounds. The best method of effecting this would be to classify the letters of the alphabet according to the method of the Sanscrit grammarians. Dr. Kraitsir gives a table of the Sanscrit or Dēva-nāgari alphabet,* the most admirable scheme of writing yet invented. The Indian student is taught to repeat his alphabet according to the following arrangement. First, the simple vowels, which, in Sanscrit, are five, — for they have two vowel sounds which are unknown to us; those which they have in common with us are *a*, *i*, and *u*;† these have each its long and short sound. Then follow the compound vowels, which are *e* and *o*; and *ai* and *au*, the longer sounds of these compounds, in which the elements composing them are more distinctly pronounced. The consonants are taught by classing together letters representing articulations formed by the same organ; and these classes are arranged according to the order of the organs of speech, beginning with the most inward, and passing to the most outward: as, first, the gutturals; then the palatals; next, a class of sounds we have not in our language, denominated cerebrals; to these succeed the dentals, and to these the labials.‡

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* *Wake* and *watch* are the same word, derived from the Anglo-Saxon *waecan*. The Anglo-Saxon *c* has in *watch* undergone the same change of sound that the Roman *c* has suffered in Italian. The *t* in this word is redundant, since *ch* denotes this palatal sound in English, as in *teach*.

† From Ang.-Sax. *taecan*, to teach.

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* See *Significance of the Alphabet*, p. 11. The Dēva-nāgari alphabet is there represented in English characters. We believe that the writing of the Sanscrit character would be a very useful exercise for children; and that an accurate knowledge of the powers and relations of letters can in no other way be so readily acquired. An acquaintance with the Sanscrit language itself, as the oldest of that family of languages to which our own belongs, for whose study we have sufficient materials, ought to be far more cultivated than it is. The intercourse of England with India, and the labors of English scholars, who have prepared admirable grammars and dictionaries of the Sanscrit, afford great facilities for this study; yet even in England it is pursued only by a few, and in this country it is almost wholly neglected.

† The original sound of the vowels is here to be understood; not that now given to them in the English alphabet. Whenever, in the present article, the sounds of the vowels are referred to, that of *a* as in *father*, of *i* as in *mien*, of *u* as in *rude*, is intended. We give, in the English alphabet, to *a* the sound of *e*, and to *i* a diphthongal sound composed of *a* and *i*, and properly represented by *ai*, as in the Greek καί

‡ *L* and *r* are regarded by the Sanscrit grammarians as semivowels; as are also the letters which correspond to our *y* and *w* before a vowel. Each of these letters, however, belongs to one of the foregoing classes; the *l* is regarded as a lingua-dental; the *r* as a cerebral; the *y* as a palatal; the *w* as a labial. To each of the classes belongs a nasal; the sounds which *n* has before a guttural, as in our word *sing*, and before a dental, as in *send*, being each denoted by a special character. We distinguish by a different sign only the sound it takes before labials, as in *imperfect* (*in-perfectus*).

The alphabet is likewise divided into ***surds*** and ***sonants***. The term

By this method of teaching the alphabet, sounds belonging to the same class are associated together in the mind; they are regarded as they really are, but as different modes of the same articulation. If we were accustomed to the observation of the relations of letters, the interchange of sounds of the same class, so frequent in different dialects of the same language and different languages of the same family, would no longer perplex us. In illustration of the interchange of cognate letters, we give a few examples of these mutations in each of the several classes.

First, of the gutturals: we have in English *Cold*, in Latin *Gelidus*;* in English *acre*, in Latin *aGer*; in Latin *Cutis*, in English *Hide*. We have in Sanscrit *Gau*, in Old High German *CHua*, in English *Cow*. In Greek we find Γυνή, in Icelandic *Kona*, in Old High German *CHona*, in Swedish *Quinna*, (*a woman*).

Of the dentals: Eng. *Tame*, Gr. Δαμάω; Lat. *Traho*, Eng. *Drag*; Germ. *Dursten*, Eng. *THirst*; Eng. *Ten*, Latin *Deni*, Germ. *Zehn*.

Of the liquids: L and N; Lat. *aLter*, Germ. *aNder*; Eng. *teNt*, Dan. *teLt*; Lat. *aNima*, It. *aLma*; — L and R; Lat. *apostoLus*, Fr. *apôtRe*; Lat. *peRegrinus*, Eng. *piLgrim*; — N and R; Gr. διάκοΝος, Fr. *diacRe*; Gr. γΡάω, Eng. *gNaw*. The lingua-dentals T and D are, as linguals, interchangeable with the liquids. Thus, in Latin, we have *Dingua* and *Lingua*; with one of which is connected our word *Tongue*; from the other is derived the French *Langue*. We have, in Latin, *meRidies* for *meDidies*; we find also *seLla*, *a seat*, and *seDere*, *to sit*; *auRis*, *the ear*, and *auDire*, *to hear*. The Greek Θώραξ is the Latin *Lorica*. *CasteLLo* is, in the Sardinian dialect, *casteDDo*. We find, in Gascon, *beT* for *beL*, *peT* for *peaN* (*pellis*).

Of the labials: Lat. *Pando*, Eng. *Bend*; Eng. *Press*, Gr. Βρύττω; Eng. *Pull*, Lat. *Vello*; Eng. *Bear*, Lat. *Fero*; Lat. *neBula*, Gr. νεΦέλη.

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surd is applied to such letters as, in the first attempt to form them, admit of no vocal sound; the term *sonant*, to such as are accompanied by an audible murmuring of the voice. Thus, of the gutturals, *c* (*k*) is surd; *g* is sonant. Of the dentals, *t* is surd; *d* is sonant. The Dēva-nāgari alphabet has, however, no surd corresponding to the sonant *v*, and no sonant corresponding to *s*; the sounds of *f* and *z* being wanting in the Sanscrit language.

There is yet another distinction between the first and second letter of the classes. The first letter of each class is a stronger articulation than the second. Thus *c* (*k*), *t*, and *p* are more forcibly uttered than *g*, *d*, and *b*.

* Pronounce the *g* in this word as in *get*.

We sometimes find the same word in each variety of form; that is, in one language, with the surd, — in another, with the sonant,— in a third, with the aspirate, of the same class. As, Eng. caRry, Lat. GeRo, Gr. ʽΑΙΡέω, Sc. HaRry;* Gr. ΠῦΡ, Old High Germ. viuRi, Germ. FeueR (Eng. *fire*); Swed. and Dan. Ting, Germ. and Dutch Ding, Eng. THing; Eng. TOKen, Dan. TeGn, Lat. siGnum, Germ. zeicHen, Pol. znaK. In the same language are sometimes found different forms of the same word, either with the same or closely related meaning. Thus we have, in English, COT and HUT; COURT and GaRDen; CUP and its diminutive, GOBlet. We have, connected with the Latin *rapere*, —in English ROB, *rive*, and RIP; in German, rauBen, raFfen, and ruPfen; in Danish, *röve* and raPpe; in Swedish, *rofwa* and roFfa.

It may be seen, even from these few examples, of how great utility would be an accurate knowledge of the alphabet, whether in the acquisition of foreign tongues, or in tracing the etymologies of our own. If children were, from their first learning of the alphabet, made familiar with the affinities of letters, and were accustomed to observe the interchange of cognate sounds in their own language, they would afterwards acquire foreign tongues with a facility now undreamed of. These mutations, in a great measure, constitute the differences between languages of the same family; the observation of them restores these languages to their ancient unity, and, even between tongues now widely divided, brings out the half-forgotten affinity. Thus the Anglo-Saxon HeaFod — in modern English contracted into *head* — is the same with the German HauPt, the Dutch HOOFd, the Swedish Hufwud, and with the Latin caPut. Eng. BeaKer, Germ. BecHer, Dan. BaeGer, is the same with the Polish POHar, and with the Latin POculum. We find Eng. HeeD, Germ. AChT, in Greek ΚῆΔος. French and Eng. BRave, Germ. BRav, in Lat. PROBus.

These changes sometimes take place very regularly. Thus *c* in Latin is often *h* in the German form of words common to both languages. As Lat. *canis*, Germ. Hund; Lat. *collis*, Germ. Halde; Lat. *collum*, Germ, Hals; Lat. *cutis*, Germ. Haut; Lat. *celare*,† Germ. Hehlen; Lat. *acerbus*,† Germ. Herbe.

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* *To carry away* and thence *to plunder*, as Gr. *αἱρέω*.

† Pronounce the *c* in these words as *k*.

D in German corresponds to *t* in Latin. Lat. T*orquere*, Germ. D*rehen;* Lat. T*onare*, Germ. D*onnern*. Corresponding to the surd in Latin and the sonant in German, we find often the aspirated dental in English ; the Dutch in these words commonly agrees with the German, and has *d*, while the Swedish and Danish more often take *t*, like the Latin ; as,

Latin.	*Germ.*	*Dutch.*	*Danish.*	*Swed.*	*English.*
Tectum,	Dach,	Dak,	Tag,	Tak,	Thatch.*
Tenuis,	Dünn,	Dun,	Tynd,	Tunn,	Thin.
Tolerare,	Dulden,	Dulden,	Taale,	Tåla,	Thole.

On the other hand, where the German has *t*, the other principal Teutonic languages have *d* ; as,

German.	*Dutch.*	*Swedish.*	*Danish.*	*English.*
Trinken,	Drinken,	Dricka,	Drikke,	Drink.
Tod,	Dood,	Död,	Död,	Death.
Teig,	Deeg,	Deg,	Deig,	Dough.

The German *z* answers to *t* in English, Dutch, Danish, and Swedish ; as,

German.	*Dutch.*	*Danish.*	*Swedish.*	*English.*
Zinn,	Tin,	Tin,	Tenn,	Tin.
Zunge,	Tong,	Tunge,	Tunga,	Tongue.
Zähre,†		Taare,	Tår,	Tear.

The Latin has often *d* corresponding to German *z* and Eng. *t ;* as,

Latin.	*German.*	*English.*
Ducere,	Ziehen,	Tug.
Duo,	Zwei,	Two.
Domare,	Zähmen,	Tame.

The Germ. *f* answers to *p* in Dutch, Swedish, and English, and to *b* in Danish ; as,

German.	*Dutch.*	*Swedish.*	*Danish.*	*English.*
Tief,	Diep,	Djup,	Dyb,	Deep.
Taufen,	Doopen,	Dopa,	Döbe,	Dip.
Laufen (*to run*),	Loopen,	Löpa,	Löbe,	Leap.

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* The *t* in *thatch* is redundant. This word is the old Eng. *thack*, Ang.-Sax. *thac*, *a roof*, from *thac-can* or *dec-an*, *to cover ;* as *tectum* from *teg-ere*, *Dach* from *deck-en*, &c.

† Gothic *tagr ;* Old High Germ. *zahar ;* Welsh *daigr* ; Greek δάϰϱυ ; old Latin *dacrima*. The guttural is a radical in all these words ; but has been lost from the English, Danish, and Swedish forms.

B at the end of a word in German is often *f* in Dutch, English, and Swedish, and *v* in Danish ; as,

German.	*Dutch.*	*Swedish.*	*English.*	*Danish.*
Dieb,	Dief,	Tjuf,	Thief,	Tyv.
Laub,	Loof,	Löf,	Leaf,	Löv.
Taub,	Doof,	Döf,	Deaf,	Döv.

B in German, when it stands between two vowels, is commonly *v* in corresponding English words ; as, Germ. *geben*, Eng. *give ;* Germ. *taube*, Eng. *dove ;* Germ. *treiben*, Eng. *drive*, &c.

The reader will already have made for himself the observation, that a change in the vowel does not affect the radical signification of a word. We sometimes find the same word written with almost every variety of vowel sign. As, Eng. *great*, Germ. *gross*, Norm. *gres*, Span. *grueso*, Lat. *crassus.* In words of the same language, these vocal changes convey modifications of meaning ; and, by permitting the expression of nice distinctions, introduce continual refinements into language. For example, we have, in English, words formerly the same, but now applied to slightly different uses, distinguished from each other by the vowel tone ; as, *stick* and *stake ; herd* and *horde ; pole*, *pale*, and *pile.* Distinctions of time are often expressed by a change in the vowel ; as, *take*, *took ; nehmen*, *nahm ; capio*, *cepi.* The transitive form of many verbs is distinguished from the intransitive by a variation of the vowel ; as, *to lie* and *to lay ; to pine* and *to pain ; to fall* and *to fell.* Similar to this last distinction is that between *cadere* and *cædere.* Some misapprehension has arisen on the subject of the vowel sounds, from overlooking the distinction between the radical and the accidental meaning of words. The observation of the vowel changes is extremely important in learning any particular language, since one radical idea may branch out into an infinity of subordinate ones. But, in tracing these derived meanings to their source, the articulate sounds are alone to be considered.

It is to be observed, also, that the order in which the letters of a word are arranged does not affect its radical signification. This order may be varied as that of words in a sentence may be. Thus the Greek ΛέΠος is our English word P*ee*L ; the German L*o*CH is in English H*o*L*e ;* Germ. L*o*C*ken* is Eng. C*a*L*l ;* Pol. G*a*D*ać* is Lat. D*i*C*ere ;* Eng.

cuP is Lat. P*oculum ;* Welsh CL*o* (*a lock*) is Eng. L*oc*K*;* Bohem. KORD (*a sword*) is Eng. D*i*RK, and both are related to Heb. דקר, D*a*K*a*R (*to pierce*).* These variations are often employed, as varieties of vowel sound are, to express fine distinctions of meaning, and thus give a greater richness and variety to language. We not unfrequently find a root forming, by a varied arrangement of its elements, in the same language, different words. Thus we find, in Latin, T*i*M*eo* and M*e*T*uo ;* c*a*V*us* and V*a*c*uus ;* c*e*RV*us* and F*u*RC*a*. We have, in English, B*ea*K*er* and P*itcher*,† from the inverted root of c*u*P. We have, to P*a*T and to T*a*P, a T*u*B and a B*u*T*t*. Again, to T*a*K*e* is to G*e*T ; a s*a*c*k* is a c*ase ;* B*a*G and B*oc*s (*box*) are but inversions of c*u*P and c*o*F*fer*,—all being things which contain and K*ee*P. B*as*K*et* is another variety of the same word ; the intensive *s* being placed before the *c*, instead of after it as in *box*.

When we pass from the range of nearly related languages, to which we have hitherto confined our attention, to the consideration of tongues widely divided from those of Europe, we shall still find the same roots with the same fundamental meaning as in our own family of tongues ; and sometimes meet with the most exact coincidences ; familiar words being disguised from us by transposition of their elements, or by the change from the stronger to the weaker sound of the same letter, or *vice versâ*. We will present some examples of this from the Magyar, a language of Tataric origin, which, lying in the midst of the languages of Europe, yet retains the peculiarities of its family unchanged, and differs from the European tongues in its whole structure and genius. When, however, we examine the elements of its words, and trace out their radical meaning, we no longer find it so estranged from our own family of languages. For example, the Magyar *é*N*e*K (*a song*) is of the same elements with the Icelandic

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* The Zigeuner or Gypsy language affords very entertaining instances of these transpositions. This people, gathering up words in all the countries they pass through, offer in their language admirable examples of the changes words undergo. As, for example, *chapescar*, from Fr. *échapper (eschapper); coblér, the elbow*, from Germ. *Elbogen*. We also find in the Tchudish languages examples of these inversions and transpositions in words which have strayed into them from the neighbouring tongues. For example, the proper name *Eric* is, with the Laps, *Keira*.

† The *c* in this word has undergone the same change it suffers in Italian. The *t* is redundant; since *ch* represents this palatal sound in English writing, as in *teach*, &c.

GaLa, *to sing*, and but an inversion of the Latin caNere. HeLy (*a place*) is, in like manner, coincident with Locus. MaDaR (*a bird*) is of the same elements with BiRD. KoMOR (*dark*) is MuRK. HoMaLy (*darkness*) is GLooM. TöR (*to break*) is English TeaR. KöPu (*a bee-hive*) is Hive. GaT (*a dike*) is the English word DiKe inverted, with the surd dental in the place of the sonant, and the sonant guttural in the place of the surd. PóK (*a spider*) is an inversion of the obsolete English COB or KOP (*a spider*), which we have still in use in *cob-web.*

We have here chosen, as examples, words in which both the elements and the signification coincide exactly. But we must not expect to find, even in nearly related languages, the same word always in precisely the same meaning.

In every language, the meaning of words, as well as their form, undergoes a gradual change; and when languages have been separated from each other for ages, the progress of this change sometimes carries them widely apart. Yet, through all these variations, the original idea is, by a practised observer, distinctly to be traced. It is, indeed, not unfrequently the case, that a word, having wandered far from its first use, retraces its steps and takes up again its first office. It sometimes happens that, where a word has died out in one language, or has undergone such transformation that its identity can no longer be certified, it still survives in another; while in the first are still to be found other words from the same root, and conveying the same fundamental idea. Thus, as names of the sun, we find in Welsh, *hâil*, in Greek, ἥλιος, in Sanscrit, *haili*; and we have in German *hell*, *bright.* Corresponding to the English *look*, the German *lugen*,* we have Welsh *llygad*, *the eye.* In Greek we find κλύειν, *to hear*, and in Irish, *kluas*, *the ear.* Related to Polish *ręka*, Bohemian *ruka*, *the hand*, are Greek ὀρέγω and English *reach.* The Greek χείρ (*a hand*) is the same root inverted; and corresponding to the Latin *manus*, as ὀρέγω to χείρ, is the Anglo-Saxon *nima*, *to take.* In Welsh we find *traed*, *the foot*, and in English, a verb *to tread*; while, answering to Irish *troeg*, *the foot*, we have *track.* To extend these comparisons beyond the Indo-European family, — we find in Magyar, *lab*, *the foot*, and, corresponding to it, in German, *laufen* (*to run*), and in English, *leap;* while, on the other hand, the Magyar *futni*, *to run*, answers to our word *foot.* Corresponding to English *go*, Greek *κίω*, we find, with the Caribari of Middle Africa, *akka*, with the Iboes, *akkau*, *the foot;* and *kuh*, *the foot*, with the Chippeways of North America. Answering to the Basque *gan*, *to walk*, we have *gann*, *the foot*, with the Wawas of Middle Africa; and we find the same word inverted in the Polish *noga* (*the foot*), and in *nuchii* (*the foot*), with the Maipurs of South America. Corresponding to Hebrew *caph*, Persian *kef*, Zigeuner *chova* (*the hand*), we have the Latin *capere* (*to take*), and English *give;* as, to our word *hand*, answer German *halten*, and English *hold.* To the Latin *digitus*, answer, in like manner, English *touch* and *take*, and Greek *δέχομαι.* From the same root, with a casual liquid inserted, is the Madagascar *tangh* (*the hand*), corresponding to the Latin *tangere.*

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* Obsolete in the written language.

We sometimes find a word, in one language, with a more restricted, in another, with a more general meaning. Thus, the Welsh *llawf*,* *the hand*, is still found in English, as the *claw* of a bird. *Deck* is, in English, restricted to the covering of a ship, while, in German, *dach* is a roof generally; *toig*, the Irish form of this word, means *a house;* while the Gaelic *teach* or *tigh* signifies, as the Latin *tectum*, both a roof and a house. It sometimes happens that the accidental application of a word survives its original meaning. Thus, though the Celtic name for a hand (*llawf*) is no longer known, in this meaning, in English, we have it in *glove*, a covering for the hand, and related to it as *boot* to *foot.* Related in the same manner to Hebrew *caph* (*the hand*), is *cuff*, the part of the sleeve coming over the hand, and *cuff*, a blow given with the hand.

In offering these examples of the affinities of languages, we have sought for those that should be obvious to the general reader, and have avoided such as would be appreciated only by those familiar with these comparisons. One accustomed to such observations perceives instantly the identity of words where the elements and the idea agree, though, to the careless eye, there may be not a letter in common. For example, the Icelandic *katr* (*glad*) has, at first sight, but little resemblance to our English *glad;* yet it is identical with this word, both in its meaning and in the elements of which it is composed. We have also confined ourselves, in these examples, to the illustration of the interchange of letters of the same class. When to an acquaintance with this is added a knowledge of the changes which sounds commonly undergo in the progress of a language, the interchange which takes place between certain classes of letters, and, further, the accidental changes and displacements to which these are liable, the study of languages is greatly simplified. All the Indo-European languages might be learned as one. The roots of the general language being once acquired, we should then need to learn, of each individual dialect, only that which is peculiar to itself in their inflection and combination. Yet we must guard ourselves against entertaining unreasonable expectations of the facilities which a scientific treatment of languages will afford; this could but result in disappointment. There is nothing in itself greatly worth, that does not demand a certain amount of toil as the price of its acquisition. But nature, in imposing this stipulation, has framed the mind of man in conformity to it. Labor is not irksome, if its end be clear and attainable, and if the manner in which it is pursued be natural and rational. But no labor is healthful that taxes the powers unequally; our present method of learning languages strains the memory alone, without calling on the aid of the judgment, or admitting the imagination as partaker, at once, and lightener of the toil; though, in the construction of language, this has borne more than its equal part with the other faculties.

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* The *ll* in Welsh is pronounced with a deep guttural aspiration, as if written *hl.*

Many of the cultivated modern nations of Europe labor under a disadvantage in the pursuit of comparative philology, arising from the inaccuracy of the alphabets of their own languages. With many of these nations, a discrepancy exists between the written and the spoken tongue; the character which denotes the ancient sound having been, in many cases, retained, where the pronunciation has undergone a change. This is particularly the case with those nations that draw the material of their language from the Latin. The guttural sounds which, in Latin, were represented by the characters *c* and *g*,* having, in the languages derived from it, undergone a change before the higher vowels, these characters continued to denote their original sounds only before *a*, *o*, and *u*, and became the representatives of palatals or dentals as often as they preceded *e* and *i*. In that part of the English language which is derived from the French and the corrupted Latin, the same irregularity prevails.

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* In order to perceive the force of the following remarks, it will be

It has unfortunately happened, that the accidental sounds have usurped the place of the original sounds in our alphabet; so that a great part of the advantage which should have resulted from the preservation of the ancient character has been lost. This, by preserving the memory of the former sound, should have afforded great assistance in the tracing of etymologies, and should have kept alive to the intelligence affinities that were lost to the ear. As it is, the sibilant sound which we give to the letter *c* before *e* and *i* appears to have a claim to be regarded as the radical element in words written with that character. The letters of an alphabet should represent the elements of which the words of a language are composed; each sound having its own proper sign. In our alphabet, as at present pronounced, the hard sibilant is twice represented, by *c* and by *s*; while, to supply the deficiency made by this transfer of the guttural character to a different sound, the Greek *k* has been adopted into our alphabet to denote the hard guttural before *e* and *i*, in words derived from the Anglo-Saxon.* The guttural sound *g*, as we hear it in *get*, *give*, *go*, &c., is absolutely unrecognized in our alphabet, while to represent the palatal *j* we have two characters, *j* and *g*. Thus, while the same character is made to represent two sounds, and while one of the most important sounds in the language is in the alphabet not represented at all, another and an inferior sound has two characters appropriated to its use. To this confusion among the characters which represent consonants, we add, in the English alphabet, an equal confusion among the vowel signs. The sound of *e* has displaced that of *a*, at the head of the alphabet,† and the *a*, which, as the simplest and most beautiful of

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necessary for the reader to call these letters by the names they had in the Roman alphabet: that is, pronounce the *c* as the *k* of our alphabet; the *g* as the first syllable of *ga-ble*.

* The Anglo-Saxons adapted the Roman alphabet to their language, and *c* had with them the power of *k* before all the vowels.

† See second note on p. 170.

vowel sounds, has always been allowed precedence of the other vowels, is absolutely not named among them by us. The proper sound of *i*, again, is transferred to *e*, while on the *i* itself, which properly represents the thinnest of the vowels, we bestow a diphthongal sound compounded of *a* and *i*. To the *u*, when we pronounce it in the alphabet, we prefix always the sound of *i* consonant (*y*). Of the three simple vowels, then, one (*a*) has no place in the alphabet; another (*i*) is represented there by a character which belongs to a different sound, and which in composition often represents that sound; and the third (*u*) is made into what Mr. Walker calls a *semi-consonant diphthong*.

This confusion among the names of the vowels in the alphabet has introduced a corresponding confusion into their use in composition; a letter being sometimes used to denote its original sound, sometimes that attributed to it in the alphabet. Thus, the short sound of *i*, as in *win*, is represented by its proper character, while its long sound is denoted by *e*, *ee*, and a variety of compounds, as in *ween*, *wean*, &c. The consonants, likewise, have invaded one the province of another. The *c*, being regarded as identical with *s* in the alphabet, has not unfrequently displaced it in words where the sibilant had a just claim; as, for example, in *patience*, *presence*, *vice*, *pace*, &c., words whose derivation required them to be written with a dental.

This disordered state of our alphabet, and careless use of the characters, have led to a habit of considering the orthography of a word as a matter merely dependent upon fashion; so that we regard it as wholly immaterial of what elements our words are composed, so long as the words themselves do but perform the present service we require of them. It is undoubtedly to be ascribed, in a great measure, to the condition of our alphabet, and the indifference this has occasioned to corruptions in our language, as well as to the derivation and affinities of our words, that the science of language is so much less generally cultivated in England and this country than with the Germans and Scandinavians. It is certainly owing to no inaptitude for this study in the English branch of the Teutonic family; for, whenever the disadvantages of early education and habit have been overcome by an extensive acquaintance with languages, the scholars of England and America have here, as elsewhere, maintained their equality.

There are in England, at the present day, men highly esteemed on the continent of Europe for their philological attainments ; and in our own country there have not been wanting those who have attained great eminence in this department. But these men have stood in a manner isolated ; the nature and value of their labors have been but imperfectly appreciated.

Of the importance of the study of language, when conducted upon philosophical principles, Dr. Kraitsir thus speaks : —

> "To inquire into the laws which regulate the combinations of sounds, and the laws for the appropriation of these combinations to the expression of thought, is the first and best discipline of the senses and mind ; and this is the only learning of languages which is worthy of the name. By a more superficial method, the use of a language, as it is current at some particular era, may be attained ; but not that philological science which is conservative of its life, and furnishes a key to all languages." — p. 5.

> "Ideas, of course, must go before words; but thought, which is the analysis and demonstration of ideas, needs words in order to fix these demonstrations, as they are successively made in the mind, for stepping-stones of its own further progress. In what period of life do minds make comparatively so great progress as in those years when the child learns to speak, although it only learns by rote? Does not nature indicate that this is the period for language-learning, by the facility of verbal memory which it gives to early years? Is it not obvious that, could nature's own method be seized, and applied to the acquisition of other languages, this enlivening effect might be prolonged through all the years of life, preserving that rapidity of perception, that disponibility of mind, which gives to the acquisitions of childhood the characteristic which is expressed by the word *intuition*? It is not necessary to have minds stereotyped while in their nonage, to effect any end whatever, even that of getting money. A general presence of mind to every thing is the desideratum for all men everywhere, pursuing whatever ends. Nothing can be gained by that stupidity which treats words as counters, making them shackles and dead weights upon thought, instead of a living furtherance of it." — pp. 6, 7.

> "In spite of all apparent objections which may be made by those who have never dived below the surface of English or French, it is true, that significant words are not made up of insignificant, but of significant sounds; that there is such unity in man, that the organic formation and the significance of elemen-

tary sounds is *one;* and that on a deep consideration of the development of human thought and feeling, under various circumstances, we shall see a reason for the development of these sounds into all the various languages spoken on the globe, and be enabled to follow out this development.

"A mere statement of this method of studying languages shows its vast importance; and places it in the fore-front of the objects which should engage the attention of men. For as universal language, in the light of ideas, is seen to be the image of man, particular languages become images of the special culture of the several nations." — pp. 19, 20.

"The history of a nation, which a profound analysis of its language discovers, is not merely, or chiefly, the history of its origin and institutions; it is a history of its internal life, its peculiar passions, the peculiar external nature which environed it, and the various changes of its circumstances and feelings; — in short, languages betray all that those which speak them are, for they are the very expression of the speakers. . . . . . There is no subject connected with the mind or destiny of man, upon which a profound insight into philology will not throw a broad light. It is a science for the mother who teaches her infant to speak its native tongue; for the man of the world, who wishes the convenience of speaking with the natives of other countries; and for the philosopher who would name the yet-to-be-discovered objects of nature, unfold the history of the past, or make manifest the laws of human progress and decay in intelligence and morals." — pp. 20, 21.

"In short, a treatment of languages, with direct reference to organic sounds, sharpens the senses, and reveals the original poetry of the unworn human mind; while the following out of the various national appropriations of these original pictures and this wild music, to the infinite variety of human thought and affection, is a real study of the mind, enabling us to obey the great Doric precept, engraved on the temple of Apollo's oracle: KNOW THYSELF." — p. 33.

It was our intention to advert to several other important topics connected with the study of language which are treated of in Dr. Kraitsir's book; but our limits compel us to reserve the consideration of these for a future occasion.